

Bespin: Action Tidings

Planet Hoppers: September -- October 2004

By [Cory Herndon](#)

Welcome to "Planet Hoppers," where each month, we bring you a set of articles on a particular world in the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* galaxy that a Gamemaster can use separately, as a linked series of events, or as a springboard for all-new adventures.

This time around, a respected Ugnaught holojournalist looks back on hundreds of years of Ugnaught history on the planet Bespin and, more recently, Cloud City.

Part 1: Live From the Surface

In which we meet Ugnaught newsman Ars Fivvle, host of Cloud City's *Action Tidings*.

Part 2: That Den o' Human Iniquity

In which Ars Fivvle describes the heroic tale of Cloud City's founding, complete with ancient holofootage.

Part 3: The High Human o' Cloud City

In which Lando Calrissian comes to Bespin and likes it so much he takes over the place.

Part 4: The Empire's Ugly Nose

In which Darth Vader also comes to Bespin and takes over the place just to impress his children.

Part 5: An Exclusive!

In which Calrissian returns to Bespin and helps daring Ugnaught holojournalist Ars Fivvle free Cloud City's Ugnaughts from the Imperials.

About the Author

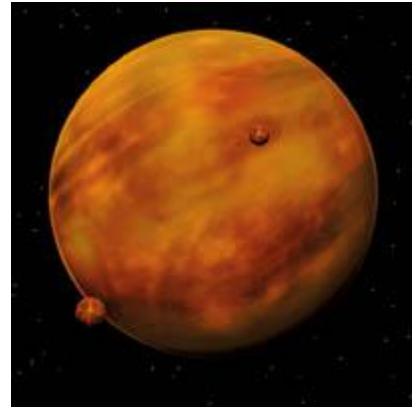
One-time *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* editor Cory J. Herndon is now a freelancer. Cory's work has appeared in *Amazing Stories*, *Duelist*, *TopDeck*, *Star Wars Gamer*, *Dragon*, and *SCIFI.com*. He has done additional design work on the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* revised core rulebook (primarily the Droids chapter), *The Dark Side Sourcebook* (creatures and archetypes), and the *Wheel of Time Roleplaying Game*. He is also the author of Volumes 5 and 6 of the **Magic: The Gathering Encyclopedia**. Cory's short story "Like Spider's Silk" appears in the *Secrets of Magic* Anthology. He asks that you please purchase a copy of it and the **D&D** novel *The Living Dead* for every room in your home. Cory is currently authoring original content for *Xbox.com*, writing the third book in an upcoming *Magic: The Gathering* novel trilogy, and continuing to design *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* material for the Wizards website.

Part 1: Live From the Surface

By Cory Herndon

Though still tied by tribal bonds to their brethren on Gentes, the Ugnaught denizens of Bespin form a distinct and unique society. Brought to Bespin centuries ago by Cloud City founder Ecclessis Figg, the Ugnaughts of the Irden, Botrut, and Isced tribes helped build Figg's amazing floating colony and have provided a steady source of labor ever since. The Ugnaughts found that they could make many more credits in the City than on Gentes, and soon many more emigrated.

After decades in the Bespin holonews business as host of the top-rated Ugnaught broadcast Action Tidings, Ars Fivvle ended his career on a high note with the award-winning documentary retrospective "Ugnaughts' Progress." The program, which featured rare footage from fifty years of Action Tidings broadcasts, proved so popular that it was picked up for galaxy-wide distribution. Fivvle retired to the Surface in style on the profits, though he would occasionally return to holojournalism when gambling debts overwhelmed him. . . .



Bespin*

Planet Type: Gas giant
Climate: Temperate (in the Life Zone)
Terrain: Gas giant, swamp (Surface only)
Atmosphere: Breathable (in the Life Zone)
Gravity: Standard (in the Life Zone), 1.5 x standard (Surface only)
Diameter: 118,000 km
Length of Day: 12 standard hours
Length of Year: 5,110 standard days
Sentient Species: Humans, Lutrillians, Ugnaughts
Languages: Basic
Population: 6 million
Species Mix: 68% Humans, 6% Lutrillians, 8% Ugnaughts, 18% other
Government: Guild
Major Exports: Tibanna gas, tourism, cloud cars
Major Imports: Foodstuffs, technology
System/Star: Bespin/Bespin
Region: Outer Rim

Planets	Type	Moons
Miser	Searing rock	0
Orin	Volcanic rock	0
Velser's Ring	Asteroid field	0
Bespin	Gas giant	2

* These planet stats were first presented in *Geonosis and the Outer Rim Worlds* and are slightly modified for Ugnaught consumption.

Ugnaughts' Progress

An Ars Fivvle Presentation of an *Action Tidings* Special Report

This holofilm has been transcribed by a Serv-O-Droid ERL-21 transcribot. "Serv-O-Droid -- modular automatons for a less-than-modular galaxy."

Advertisement ends.

Bespin, full frame. Action Tidings theme ensues. Main title, transcribed above due to 97% calculated probability of more dramatic placement. Close in on the gas giant, into atmosphere, past Cloud City, settling on the center of Ugnorgrad on the Ugnought Surface. Music reaches dramatic climax as holocam settles on the flashing holologo atop the Action Tidings Tower.

Cross-fade to Ars Fivvle, alone in darkened studio. He stands in dramatic spotlight. He is both fat and old for an Ugnought. Estimated probability Fivvle abuses tabac: 88%.

Ars Fivvle: Good evenin' t'ye. I be Ars Fivvle, reportin' fer the final time on behalf o' *Action Tidings*. Tonight, we be comin' t'ye live from the *Action Tidings* studio in Ugnorgrad, a city near an' dear t'me own heart. Our people's homeworld may be Gentes, but our *home* is here, in the clouds o' Bespin. Tonight, I be sayin' goodbye t'our longtime viewers with a look back at the history o' the Ugnought people on Bespin, an' the wee part *Action Tidings* played in it.

Spotlight up on previously unrevealed holodisplay, which begins playback of what are apparently famous Ugnoughts. Ars Fivvle is the first shown.

AF: Our people have long had a rich oral history, o' course, but it is my humble hope that this holodocumentary will prove once an' fer all that the Ugnoughts o' Bespin, through grit, determination, an' most importantly innate cleverness, have made Bespin the world it is today.

Holodisplay shifts from famous Ugnoughts to shots of laboring Ugnoughts in Cloud City and in the Surface mines. Ars Fivvle is seen in each shot, microphone in hand. Estimated probability that Ars Fivvle intends to lead with an autobiographical montage: 72%.



AF: But first, since this is me last broadcast, I ask that ye bear with me as we take a look at me own career -- the highs, the lows, the long an' the short o' it ye might say.

Fivvle turns to holodisplay, which remains frozen on an image of young Fivvle, mouth agape displaying several missing teeth. Fivvle coughs. Fivvle coughs more loudly. Fivvle sighs and turns to face off-camera.

AF: Pordy? Roll the clip, Pordy.

Pordy: (off-camera) Sure an' I be rollin' it, A.F.!

Holodisplay shifts to still image of an Ugnought infant. Predicted authenticity of information presented within upcoming clip: 57%.

This unit now activating summarization protocols to prevent catastrophic optical sensor failure.

GM Notes: Ars Fivvle

Ars Fivvle, executive producer and anchorman emeritus for the popular Cloud City news program *Action Tidings*, is the unofficial president of the equally unofficial Ars Fivvle fan club. Yet despite his propensity to put himself into the stories he covers, his snout for news has made him one of the most successful regional holojournalists in the Outer Rim. He prefers to speak Basic (with a thick Isced accent), and most every Ugnought that works on the program also speaks the common galactic tongue, albeit with varying levels of skill.

Fivvle's career covers a century of Bespin and Outer Rim news. When the program became wildly successful after the expulsion of Treece's Imperial troops, *Action Tidings* began to hire bodyguards and other security professionals while on assignment. During the Rebellion era and beyond (even after his ostensible "retirement"), Fivvle might hire the heroes for protection or as guides on a particularly tricky news assignment. The heroes might even encounter the *Action Tidings* team if they find themselves caught up in events that qualify as big news on Bespin.

These stats represent Fivvle at the peak of his field-reporting career, one year before the Battle of Endor.

Ars Fivvle (146 years old): Male Ugnaught Expert 3/Diplomat 5, Init +0; Defense 13 (+2 class, +1 size); Spd 6 m; VP/WP --/12; Atk +4 melee (1d3-1, punch) or +5 ranged; SQ Ugnaught bonus feat: Endurance; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +9; SZ S; FP 0; DSP 0; Rep +4; Str 8, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 13; Challenge Code: A.

Equipment: Microphone, self-lighting tabac pipe.

Skills: Bluff +9, Computer Use +8, Diplomacy +11, Gather Information +14, Knowledge (Bespin lore) +11, Knowledge (technology) +8, Knowledge (streetwise) +4, Knowledge (history) +6, Profession (journalist) +16, Read/Write Basic, Read/Write Ugnaught, Sense Motive +5, Spot +5, Speak Basic, Speak Huttese, Speak Lutrillian, Speak Ugnaught.

Feats: Endurance, Fame, Skill Emphasis (Knowledge [Bespin lore]), Skill Emphasis (Diplomacy), Skill Emphasis (Gather Information), Skill Emphasis (Profession [journalist]).

Part 2: That Den o' Human Iniquity

By Cory Herndon

Ecclessis Figg, the founder of Beshpin's Cloud City, was more than just a brilliant, visionary businessman. In the days when the outer hyperspace lanes were still being mapped, Figg was also a bold, visionary explorer. He was the first to map a safe route into the Anoat system (home of the Ugnaughts), and would later return to the planet Gentes when he needed a large source of reliable workers to get his fantastic project built on time and under budget.

This week's transcribed excerpt from Ars Fivvle's Action Tidings Special Report sheds new light on the first Ugnaughts to arrive on Beshpin and the lives they left behind, with a detailed look at the home away from home they built for themselves -- the so-called "Ugnaught Surface."

Ugnaughts' Progress

An Ars Fivvle Presentation of an Action Tidings Special Report

This holofilm has been transcribed by a Serv-O-Droid ERL-21 transcribot. "Serv-O-Droid -- Shouldn't your droid be serving you?"

Advertisement ends.

Ars Fivvle, to this unit's dismay, continues. The holodisplay over his left shoulder displays a standard postcard shot of Cloud City. Estimated probability that Fivvle used image without permission: 72%.

Ars Fivvle: As ye have seen, me own career, inspiring as it may be t'young Ugnaughts the galaxy over, be dwarfed by the accomplishments of me Ugnaught brethren after many long centuries on Beshpin. Especially when ye consider what our own forebears endured t'build that floatin' "city in the clouds."

Holodisplay shifts to archival footage of ancient Ugnaught belters extracting ore from mines.

AF: These work gangs o' belters were the first Ugnaughts in the Beshpin system. Over a thousand Ugnaughts died in the mines of Miser, Beshpin's innermost world, where we would extrude the raw materials t'build Figg's dream. Why did three entire tribes of Ugnaughts choose t'leave the relative safety of Gentes fer a strange system where they faced harsh conditions, an' worse, low pay? The alternative, o' course, was much worse. Ye forget that at the time, most Ugnaughts were slaves. An' indeed, Figg paid fer the Irden, Botrut, an' Isced tribes, bought them outright.

Holodisplay shifts to show even more ancient Ugnaughts working in factories and other harsh environments. Each short clip ends with the accidental death of at least one Ugnaught in the image.

AF: Aye, it were harsh times fer the Ugnaught people. So when Figg offered the three tribes their freedom, an' a chance t'earn wages an' own a stake in their future, o' course they jumped at the chance.

Estimated probability Ars Fivvle has jumped for any reason in the past ten years: 4%. Holodisplay changes to show the floating skeletal structure of what would become Cloud City. Image zooms in on dozens of Ugnaughts working and building.

Image shifts to long shot of skeletal structure. Time-lapse imaging depicts growth of structure into Floating Home colony, then transforms further into modern Cloud City.

The Millennium Falcon sails through Cloud City.

AF: These Ugnaught pioneers became more successful than their brethren on Gentes could e'er have imagined at the time. An' since they were in on the ground floor o' this new venture, so t'speak, they were able t'build inta

the new structure an entire system o' tunnels, passages, an' warrens that we Ugnoughts use t'get around the city the way we like. Yes, the Ugnoughts had succeeded in findin' a new home with the humy Figg.

Image shifts to human [databank cross-reference #224515997: Ecclessis Figg] in ornate robes who presents a small golden statue to a tall (1.5 meter) Ugnought [databank cross-reference #224516041: Boss Ugnor] also dressed in his species' equivalent of finery.

AF: An' with that success came a wee thirst fer a drop o' real power in the city. Within a few years o' Figg changin' the name o' the place from Floatin' Home t'Cloud City, the legendary Boss Ugnor -- the tallest an' most noble Ugnought in Bepin's history -- brought the ufflors together with the Baron t'establish the Ugnought Mechanics Union. Though we o' course still follow our own traditions, the Union made Ugnor the "Ufflor o' Ufflors," a leader of all three tribes an' the one t'speak an' negotiate on all our behalfs with the rest o' Cloud City's guilds. With a growin' Ugnought presence, Boss Ugnor wanted us all t'have a little slice o' home here on Bepin. An' so the Surface came t'be.

Holodisplay shifts to a long shot of the construction of the Ugnought Surface. Time lapse imaging similar to presentation of Cloud City growth plays during the following narration.

AF: Many humans will try an' tell ye there ain't no such thing as the surface o' Bepin, an' technically they be right -- that's why Boss Ugnor decided the planet needed one. Usin' leftover materials from the construction project floatin' overhead, materials given freely by a grateful Baron Figg, Boss Ugnor led thousands of Ugnoughts in a second massive construction project. An' as ye can see, the Surface has evolved o'er time, just as any landscape would.

The holodisplay flickers and dies. Fivvle fidgets.

AF: Blast it Pordy, where's me holo?!

Probability Fivvle damaged holodisplay due to incompetence: 95.975%.

GM Notes: The Ugnought Surface

Almost a full kilometer directly below the lowest weather vane on the floating (yet relatively stationary) Cloud City, another "city in the clouds" rides the Bepin atmosphere. The bizarre structure known as the Ugnought Surface spans roughly one kilometer square and is covered in improbable stretches of swamp, marsh, and jungle.

The artificial landscape is laid over an internal framework of plasteel. At certain points, storms and more than a few aircar collisions have exposed the endoskeleton of the Surface, but the sturdy frame has never buckled. The exposed girders have instead become walkways with a spectacular view of Bepin's turbulent atmosphere, a popular place to visit for the overflow of Cloud City tourists that began to arrive after the Empire fell. A complex internal system of giant bladders filled with lighter-than-air Tibanna gas and additional bladders attached to most every building keep the Surface at the perfect altitude to maintain the warmth and humidity Ugnoughts prefer.

The center of the Surface is home to Ugnorgrad, a small "city" of Ugnoughts that's home to union boss King Ozz and many of the more powerful union leaders. The Union Hall is also located here, and can be seen from the famous *Action Tidings* tower. Other structures include ancient Tibanna refineries (a relic of frequent and ill-advised attempts by past union bosses to "bring mining to the Surface"), a unique Ugnought-designed power station that keeps the entire place operational, an abandoned Imperial outpost now serving as public housing, and a large, unique building suspended over open space by cables and Tibanna bladders that has been at various times a boss's mansion, a luxury hotel, and is currently drawing gourmets in droves as Zavlabar's Gentes Grill. It's Bepin's first Ugnought restaurant that actually brings a majority of its patrons from Cloud City itself.

Over the centuries, the Surface has changed and evolved. The general bowl shape of the structure remains, trapping water from Bepin's atmosphere that replenishes the swamps and helps maintain the artificially enhanced humidity. Ugnorgrad itself is somewhat concave -- the large central fountain in front of Ozz's Palace is a full 20 meters below rim level.

The native Gentes flora and fauna that old Boss Ugnor introduced have over time formed their own unique ecosystem unlike anything else in the galaxy. And while there are no known large predators or herbivores on the

Surface, an aggressive, alien, stinging insect species spread into the swamps when an Alderaanian transport craft crashed there long ago. The nank fly is known to carry some diseases that may prove harmful or even fatal to Humans, though to Ugnaghts it's just another harmless bug. Ugnaght chefs describe nank larvae as a rare delicacy, and it's one of the most popular items on the menu at Zavlabar's.

Most Ugnaghts prefer to travel over the Surface (and between the Surface and Cloud City) in floatboats, vehicles that use repulsors only for steering and stay aloft with the use of the ubiquitous Ugnaght Tibanna bladders. But twice a year since King Ozz took over, the union boss invites daredevils from all over the galaxy to compete in a one-of-a-kind skimmer race. Competitors follow a course known as the Ugnorgrad Swampway in these special speeders designed for the swamps. Temporary viewing stands are erected all along the course, floating just over the Surface with the help of their own Tibanna bladders. The course includes some harrowing jumps over gaps in the Surface that have cost more than a few racers their lives, but the Swampway 200 has proven to be wildly popular and made Ozz a fairly well-known figure on the Outer Rim. Some ufflors have become concerned that the race may soon bring unwanted attention from the criminal underworld, especially the Hutts.

The population of the Surface is in constant flux, as many of its residents who work in the metropolis above keep primary homes in the Ugnaght-heavy Mining Quarter of Cloud City. This has given the Surface Ugnaghts a strange mix of affluence -- though few Ugnaghts, even King Ozz, are "rich" by galactic standards, many have large homes for their families -- and the semi-poverty experienced by hundreds of Ugnaghts that dwell in public housing converted from outdated, nonfunctioning Tibanna refineries. The development of three separate tribal home-warren areas has helped the united Ugnaghts maintain their clan identities. At any given time, the Surface is home to anywhere from ten to twenty thousand Ugnaghts (and a few non-Ugnaght visitors), compared to a population nearly fifty times that number in the Mining Quarter.

In recent years, King Ozz has decreed that blood duels, a formalized mortal combat that erupts whenever more than one Ugnaght family member is in line for an inherited "blood profession" such as Belter, must take place on the Surface and be witnessed by a non-family member if they are to be honored by the Union. This has caused a profitable explosion in the sales of small floatboats. Ars Fivvle noted in a widely-seen report that King Ozz is secretly the majority owner of Ugboat, the largest manufacturer of floatboats on the Surface, though Ozz's spokesman has denied any connection to the blood duel decree.

View [Map of the Ugnaght Surface](#)

The Ugnaght Surface Map Key

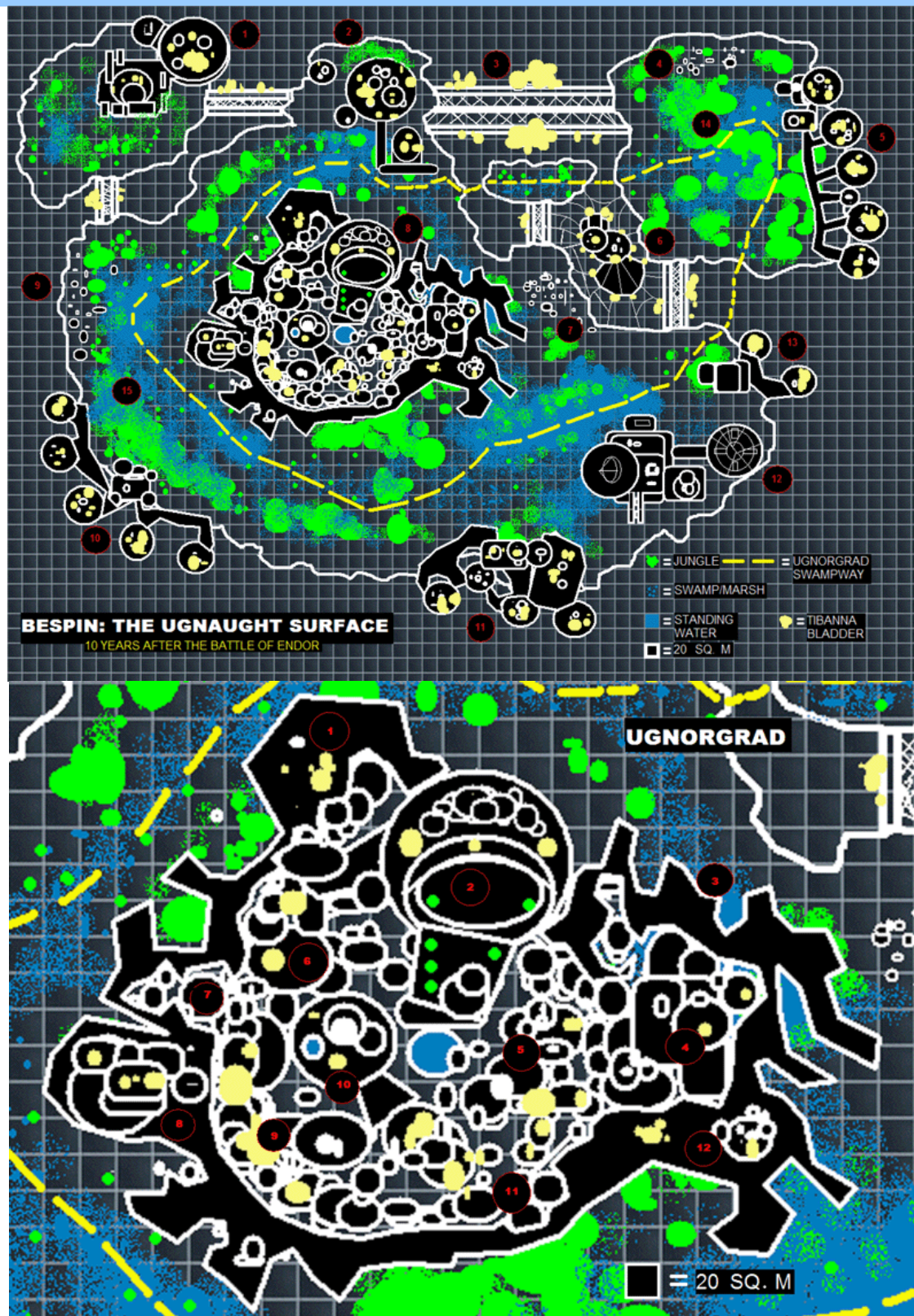
1. Figg Power Station
2. King Ozz's Personal Estate (with attached Skimmer Racing Center)
3. The Big Bridge (note larger-than usual Tibanna bladders)
4. Irden tribal warrens (mostly underground)
5. The Northeast Refineries (abandoned, converted to housing and businesses)
6. Zavlabar's Gentes Grill
7. Botrut tribal warrens
8. Ugnorgrad
9. Isced tribal warrens
10. The Southwest Refineries (abandoned, used as visitor housing)
11. The South Refineries (abandoned, converted to housing and businesses)
12. Imperial Outpost 5440 (abandoned, converted to housing, businesses, and HoloNet relay)
13. The East Refineries (abandoned, converted to housing and businesses)
14. Gruk's Jungle
15. Phizbin Marsh

View [Map of Ugnorgrad](#)

Ugnorgrad Map Key

1. Floatboat Docks
2. King Ozz's Palace (officially named Boss Mansion)
3. The Broadwalk (popular with visitors and fishermen)
4. Ugboat Building (Corporate HQ, Manufacturing Center and Sales Floor)
5. Residential (upper-class families)
6. Tralkov's Bar (Union hangout, linked via underground tunnels directly to Mechanics Union Hall)
7. Elgerkab's Cantina (Non-Union hangout, currently undergoing major reconstruction after the fourth accidental fire in five years)

8. Ugnorgrad Performance Hall (drama, dance, and music for Ugnaught sensibilities)
9. Residential (upper-class and union leaders)
10. Mechanics Union Auxiliary Meeting Hall (primary meeting hall located in Cloud City Mining Quarter)
11. Ars Fivvle's Home
12. *Action Tidings* Tower



Part 3: The High Human o' Cloud City

By Cory Herndon

When noted gambler Lando Calrissian actually won Cloud City in an insanely high-stakes sabacc match, many citizens (especially the Ugnaughts) feared that their new leader, with his scoundrel's background, would prove to be one of the worst administrators in the city's history. Surprising everyone but himself and his new aide, Lobot, Calrissian turned out to be an extremely capable executive who helped bring relations between the mostly Human guilds and the Ugnaught Union to a new level of fairness and respect.

A much younger Ars Fivvle interviewed the new baron-administrator for an early installment of the Ugnaught news program Action Tidings, and in this week's transcribed excerpt from "Ugnaughts' Progress," the aging newsman lets the archival footage do most of the talking.

Ugnaughts' Progress

An Ars Fivvle Presentation of an Action Tidings Special Report

This holofilm has been transcribed by a Serv-O-Droid ERL-21 transcribot. "Serv-O-Droid -- A lot of droid. Not a lot of credits."

Ars Fivvle walks to the powered-down holodisplay. He briefly examines the controls. Estimated probability Fivvle actually knows how to repair holodisplay: 13%. Estimated probability Fivvle cannot even locate the power switch: 94.5%.

Ars Fivvle: Beggin' yer pardon, folks, but we here at *Action Tidings* have always broadcast live t'ye whenever the opportunity allowed, an' this is one of those times dedication like that comes back t'bite ye on the -- Pordy! Get in here, lad!

A second Ugnaught [no datafile available, estimated probability that new arrival is Ugnaught designated "Pordy": 99.8%] walks into frame, avoids facing camera.

Pordy: Looks broken, A.F.

AF: I know it be broken, ye daft --

Pordy kicks holodisplay, which flickers and powers back on.

Pordy: There ye be.

AF: Aye, thank ye lad, ye can return t'yer camera now.

Pordy: See, it looks like this wire here, she came loose --

Ars Fivvle smiles. Estimated probability expression is sincere: 0.2%.

AF: Pordy. Start the file, an' get ye t'the camera. We're live, laddie.

Pordy: Right. Sorry, A.F.

Pordy presses playback control, then exits frame. Fivvle returns to camera as holodisplay brings up images of a younger Fivvle settling into a chair opposite former baron-administrator Lando Calrissian. The older Fivvle looks on as image zooms in on holodisplay.

The following segment transcribes holodisplay footage.

AF: Welcome t'the Mining Quarter, Mr. Baron-Administrator. Thank ye fer providin' this interview, an' on behalf o' the Ugnaught population o' Bespin, may I extend me heartiest congratulations on yer new position.

Lando Calrissian: Thank you . . .

AF: Please, call me Ars.

LC: Arse?

AF: Close enough, Mr. Baron-Administrator.

LC: Please, call me Mr. Calrissian, or Lando if ye -- if you prefer. Baron-administrator is quite a mouthful. Here's an exclusive for you: The first citizen that comes up with a better title gets to lead the Miner's Guild.

On the holodisplay, the younger Fivvle's eyes widen in surprise.

LC: Uh, that was a joke. A bad one, obviously. Tell you what, why don't I let you start.

AF: Aye, thank ye. Now, we're proud o' what we do here at *Action Tidings*, but if I may be more frank than me producers appreciate, what made ye decide t'give yer first public interview t'the smallest news service on Bespin?

LC: You sell yourself short. *Action Tidings* may be the smallest news service on Bespin, but it's also the largest -- some might say only -- news service that specifically targets Ugnaughts. And that's why I'm here. From what I've learned in only a few short days as baron-administrator, your people have not always been treated well by the rulers of Cloud City.



AF: Aye, though wages they earned, it's a well-known fact that our ancestors were still technically slaves bought by Figg when they arrived.

LC: Exactly. And Figg -- correct me if I'm wrong -- is respected and admired by many Ugnaughts.

AF: Without the first High Human, aye, the tribes would likely 'a' found themselves splitting rocks on a Hutt slave planet.

LC: But he *bought* you. And he's a hero to many Ugnaughts. So I can imagine how badly some other administrators have treated your people. I want to speak directly to the three tribes, as many individual Ugnaughts as I can, and tell you all that despite what you may have heard I have no intention of turning the city into a de facto slave camp, like some of my predecessors. In fact, I have a private conference with the leaders of the union later today, and we're going to talk about Ugnaught concerns.

AF: Well, that's good t'hear. Any tidbits o' information fer our viewers as t'the details, or would that be showin' yer hand?

LC: I'll admit showing my hand is not my usual style, but in this case I'm happy to share my plans. First, I want to

raise the wages across the board for City employees, but I aim to *double* the wages of the Ugnaught workers.

Young Fivvle gapes. Estimated probability Fivvle still has his own teeth today: 78%.

AF: *Double?* Laddie, uh, Mr. Calrissian, yer makin' me wish I'd gone into engineerin'!

LC: It's my hope that by raising the income of union members, the overall wealth of the Ugnaught population will increase, as well. From what I understand, seven adult Ugnaughts out of ten are in the union, present company excepted.

AF: Don't worry about me, Mr. Calrissian, me mate Pordy'll buy the lum. He's in the union. *(Chuckles)* Ye said "first." I take it ye have further plans?

LC: Indeed. Credits don't appear from thin air, so that increase in wages is going to have to be balanced out. That means we can't stop looking the other way at the refineries.

AF: *(Visibly nervous and obviously caught off guard)* Refineries?

LC: Maybe I should have saved this one for the meeting with Ozz, but like I said, I want to reach all the Ugnaughts so they see how this part of my plan makes sense. The Ugnaughts are still running a couple of small independent refineries on the Surface. I've talked with the Exex and Parliament, and they've agreed to support my wage increases as long as Tibanna refining stops entirely.

AF: Ye'll meet resistance on that one, I think.

LC: Maybe, but I didn't get where I am without taking the odd chance now and then. *(Laughs)* But there it is. I look at it this way -- refining Tibanna on the Surface just doesn't make good business sense, for the union or Cloud City. Instead, we've already begun plans for a dozen new refineries in the city that will, as I mentioned, be paying Ugnaught workers double what they've been earning. My hope, and it's obviously not a secret, is that those conducting inefficient mining and refining on the Surface will move to the city willingly.

AF: It is possible. I wish ye luck. I can tell by the smile on Pordy's face that he's already countin' the extra credits. So what other surprises would ye like t'spring on our unsuspectin' public, Mr. Calrissian?

LC: Surprises? I certainly hope it won't surprise you or your viewers by this point that I want to increase production and efficiency throughout the city. But not so much that we begin to draw attention from the Empire.

AF: So ye have no love fer the Empire, then?

LC: You might say that. You also might say that I have no love for the way the Empire does business, and nothing but respect and admiration for this city and the way *it* does business. Not that efficiency is everything. Some mighty bad deals have been made in the name of efficiency, but don't worry -- I can smell a bad deal a parsec away. That's what made me the card player I am, and that's one way I intend to keep things running smoothly here. Call it the Lando System.

AF: Aye, maybe it'll catch on. Now as ye may know, rumors abound about ye, Mr. Calrissian. Fer this next segment, I'd like ye t'address them. Clear the air, if ye will.

LC: Go right ahead. I'll do what I can to dispel the negative and reinforce the complimentary.

AF: Is it true ye plan to ensl -- no, already covered that . . . ah! Is it true ye won yer position in a sabacc match against Baron Raynor?

LC: How could I deny that after everything else I've said? *(Laughs)* True. Not a rumor at all. But I won't tell you what my hand was.

AF: What about the Battle of Taanab? According t'reports, ye --

LC: Er, I know what I just said, but let's skip that one. I was just lucky, and in the right place at the right time.

AF: Is it true yer planning on abolishing the laws of citizenship?

LC: What? Where did you hear -- ? No, nothing of the sort. For one, I'm not the only one in charge. The Exex and Parliament would never allow that, to say nothing of the guilds. Second, I've actually already accepted citizenship myself.

AF: Welcome, then, new citizen! We've also heard ye've been carryin' on a long-running relationship with the Queen o' Drogheda. Any chance we'll be seein' her visitin' our fair city?

LC: Funny, I somehow assumed these rumors were all about what I planned to do as baron-administrator. Sorry, Ars, no comment. Read into that what you will.

The holodisplay image crossfades into the Action Tidings logo. Ars Fivvle returns to the frame.

AF: O' course, that interview helped *Action Tidings* become the most trusted name in Ugnaught news. But even a fine, upstandin' humy like Lando Calrissian would not be able t'prevent the next tragedy t'hit Bespin's Ugnaught population: the Empire.

GM Notes: Ugnaughts During Calrissian's Tenure

In the few short years that he ran Cloud City before Darth Vader changed his plans forever, Lando Calrissian proved to be the most capable, fair-minded baron-administrator in centuries. Under his leadership, the Ugnaughts did indeed see a massive wage increase and better working conditions, and many began to buy up what property was left on the Surface below. This brief season of empowerment for the Ugnaughts came to a violent end with the arrival of the Empire, and for a time the Ugnaughts would once again find themselves enslaved. But this time, thanks to the respect Calrissian had shown them, they weren't going to take it lying down.

Ugnaught Foreman: Male or Female Ugnaught Expert 10, Init +0; Defense 14 (+3 class, +1 size); Spd 6 m; VP/WP --/13; Atk +10/+5 melee (1d3+2, punch) or +10/+5 melee (1d6+2, wrench) or +8/+3 ranged; SQ Ugnaught bonus feat: Endurance; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +8; SZ S; FP 0; DSP 0; Rep +2; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 12; Challenge Code: B.

Equipment: Foreman's vest, large mechanic's wrench, toolkit, union ID.

Skills: Appraise +6, Computer Use +9, Craft (droids) +3, Craft (electronic devices) +4, Demolitions +4, Disable Device +11, Knowledge (Bespin lore) +2, Knowledge (engineering) +13, Knowledge (technology) +14, Profession (foreman) +12, Read/Write Ugnaught, Repair +17, Speak Ugnaught.

Feats: Endurance, Gearhead, Skill Emphasis (Knowledge [engineering]), Skill Emphasis (Knowledge [technology]), Skill Emphasis (Profession [foreman]), Emphasis (Repair), Weapon Group Proficiency (simple weapons).

Part 4: The Empire's Ugly Nose

By Cory Herndon

What Darth Vader wanted, Darth Vader almost always got. And after the destruction of the Death Star and the Battle of Hoth, he wanted more than anything to capture Luke Skywalker on Cloud City. Vader made Lando Calrissian a deal the latter literally could not refuse -- not if he wanted to see his city survive.

While holodocuments of the event are well known and widespread, only the Ugnaught community of Bespin, courtesy of an intrepid reporter named Ars Fivvle and his equally intrepid holocam operator, Pordy, saw one of the most intriguing news broadcasts live from the takeover. As part of the Action Tidings Special Report "Ugnaughts' Progress," Fivvle recalls the second-most harrowing experience of his illustrious career.

Ugnaughts' Progress

An Ars Fivvle Presentation of an *Action Tidings* Special Report

This holofilm has been transcribed by a Serv-O-Droid ERL-21 transcribot. "Serv-O-Droid -- Now self-lubricating!"

Ars Fivvle: Aye, the darkest time in the recent history o' the Ugnaught tribes o' Bespin tragically began just as Baron-Administrator Calrissian had gotten this city hummin' like a well-oiled droid. O' course I'm referrin' t'that blight on the galaxy, the Empire. Coincidentally, me crew an' I were in Cloud City, headin' fer an interview with the UMU Employee o' the Year, when the first Imperial troops entered the metropolis.

Zoom in on holodisplay, which shifts to show the shadowy, faint image of Ars Fivvle, older than he was in the last segment but still much younger and slimmer than he appears today. Fivvle lights a small tabac pipe in violation of building codes, coughs, turns to holodisplay.

Estimated probability that Fivvle will survive until the end of the current broadcast: 62%. Estimated probability that Fivvle will survive until the end of the year: 16%.

The following segment transcribes holodisplay footage.

AF:*(loud whisper)* Good afternoon, I be Ars Fivvle, reportin' fer *Action Tidings*. We be comin' t'ye live from Cloud City, where we --

Off camera, a loud explosion mercifully causes Fivvle to stop.

Voice:*(Off-camera)* Open up in there! This city is now under the jurisdiction of the Empire. Come out willingly, or face the consequences. *[Analysis: vocal characteristics indicate an Imperial stormtrooper.]*

AF:*(whisper)* Pordy, did ye happen t'bring a blaster with ye?

Pordy:*(whisper)* Nae! Don't even own one, A.F.!

AF:*(whisper)* Well ye'd better find somethin' fast, laddie!

Stormtrooper:*(Off-camera)* That was your final warning. Open fire!

Loud blaster fire erupts. An orange glow becomes visible in darkness. Estimated probability stormtroopers are using blasters to open the door: 99.9999%.

AF: We just ran outta time! Whadda ye got, Pordy?

Pordy: Well, I got the camera.

AF: Then don't stop shootin', lad, whate'er else ye do. We're goin' t'give 'em the fight o' their lives before they take us.

Pordy: It's been good workin' with ye, Ars.

Ars Fivvle raises a heavy wrench in one hand. Estimated probability wrench is a found item: 96%. Estimated probability it could serve as a weapon in Fivvle's hands: 7%.

AF: Ye too, Pordimer. Ye too.

Glow grows brighter. Hissing is heard over blaster fire as metal of door begins to melt.

AF: Any second now . . . Ugnor's thumbs, the heat is just --

Analysis: Change in sound of blaster fire indicates presence of three new blaster rifles outside what can now be seen to be a small utility closet.

Stormtrooper:(off camera) Aieeee!

Glow slowly dims. Analysis: Number of blaster rifles reduced by one. By two. By four. By six. By eight. Blaster fire ceases. Estimated probability the newcomers have eliminated the stormtroopers: 94%.

Pordy: A.F., what's goin' on?

AF: I don't know, me bucko, but me nose is twitchin'. There's a story out --

Voice: Who's in there?

AF: Yikes!

Fivvle drops to floor, out of frame. Camera remains in place.

Pordy: Uh . . . A.F.? Someone's openin' the door. The normal way, I think.

Audio indicates off-camera door opening. Holodisplay image brightens 82%.

Voice:(unidentified Human male)There's someone in here. They might be hurt.

Voice:(unidentified Human female) We don't have time! We've got to get to the docking platform!

Voice:(unidentified Wookiee male, translated from Shyriiwook) Traitor, if we don't keep going, I'm going to tear your arms off, I'm going to tear your legs off, I'm going to crush your skull with your femur, and then put your arms where your legs go and your legs where your arms go before I put this blaster barrel in your -



Voice:(Human male) Look, keep going and I'll catch up at the East Platform. I just need a second.

Voice:(Human female) We aren't letting you out of our sight.

Voice:(Human male) You in there, did you miss the announcement? Get out of the city, the Empire's taken over! I think I bought you some -- Fivvle?

AF: Calrissian? Calrissian! Pordy, it's Calrissian!

Image shifts left to include a Human female [databank cross-reference #266891552: Princess Leia Organa of Alderaan], a male Wookiee [databank cross-reference #2668911621: Chewbacca of Kashyyyk] carrying a dismembered protocol droid [databank cross-reference #145126041: Cybot Galactica 3PO series] and Lando Calrissian. Human female and male Wookiee run out of frame.

Chewbacca:(off-camera, translated from Shyriiwook) I can still shoot you from here! Don't dawdle!

Lando Calrissian: Chewie, I'll be -- blast! Look, get to the Surface if you can, guys, or better yet, get to a starship.

AF: But what about --

Calrissian leaves frame.

LC:*(off-camera)* I made a mistake! And a friend of mine is paying the price. I've got to go!

AF: Pordy, did you --

Pordy: I got it, A.F.!

LC:*(off-camera)* And don't even think about using this footage! I'll be back!

Holodisplay reverts to Action Tidings logo. Pull back to reveal host Ars Fivvle smoking a tabac pipe, which he quickly extinguishes.

AF: Fortunately, Lando Calrissian did return, in time t'aid the Ugnaughts in driving the Empire out o' Cloud City an' off the Surface. The *Action Tidings* news team, o' course, was critical t'the success of the heroic Ugnaught rebels as well, an' . . .

Ars Fivvle chuckles, which becomes a cough, then a full convulsive hack that continues for 22.9 seconds. Fivvle retrieves tabac pipe, shrugs, and triggers the ignition switch. Draws, exhales. Estimated probability Fivvle will survive broadcast recalculated: 13%.

AF: We've got the footage to prove it. But first, these words from Zavlabar's Gentes Grill -- home of the delicious an' succulent flash-fried nankling.

GM Notes: Captain Treece

Imperial Navy Captain Hugo Treece, originally from Corellia, was personally appointed by Darth Vader to oversee Cloud City when the Empire seized control. Treece served aboard several Star Destroyers in a swift rise through the ranks; and commanded one, the *Imperial-class Punisher*. Naturally ambitious and possessed of cruel intelligence, Treece turned the city into a slave camp for the Ugnaughts and placed Cloud City under martial law for several months. The restrictions had just begun to be relaxed (though not for the Ugnaughts) when Treece was forced to evacuate the city after Ugnaught rebels threatened to destroy it.

Treece enslaved the Ugnaughts on general principle, but soon realized that he could make a substantial fortune on the side by overworking the creatures -- of which there were plenty -- to death in order to increase Cloud City's Tibanna exports to unheard-of levels. Shortly after Treece and his forces were driven off Bespin, Lando Calrissian arranged to send the details of Treece's embezzlement to Darth Vader's personal account on Aargau. Treece disappeared soon thereafter, presumed executed.

Heroes encountering the somewhat heavysset Treece often underestimate the Imperial's speed and accuracy with a sidearm -- and his keen, devious intellect.

Captain Hugo Treece (Cloud City administrator): Male Human Noble 4/Soldier 1/Officer 7, Init +6 (+2 Dex, Improved Initiative); Defense 18 (+8 class); Spd 10m; VP/WP 59/12; Atk +9/+4 melee (1d3, punch) or +9/+4 melee (1d4, knife) or +11/+6 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ Bonus class skill: Bluff, coordinate +1, favor +2, inspire confidence, leadership, resource access, requisition supplies, tactics, uncanny survival; SV Fort +8, Ref +10, Will +9; SZ M; FP 2; DSP 20; Rep +6; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 13; Challenge Code E.

Equipment: Blaster pistol, code cylinders (3), credit chip (100,000 credits), encrypted Imperial comlink, Imperial Navy Captain's uniform, Imperial rank insignia, knife (concealed).

Skills: Appraise +9, Bluff +18, Computer Use +17, Diplomacy +11, Gather Information +12, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (Bespin) +6, Knowledge (bureaucracy) +6, Knowledge (business) +8, Knowledge (tactics) +9, Knowledge (technology) +9, Profession (Naval Officer) +10, Read/Write Basic, Sense Motive +16, Speak Basic,

Speak Neimoidian, Speak Ryl.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Far Shot, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Persuasive, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Group Proficiencies (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, heavy weapons, simple weapons, vibro weapons).

Part 5: An Exclusive!

By Cory Herndon

Despite Ugnaught holojournalist Ars Fivvle's promise that his retirement broadcast -- the Action Tidings Special Report "Ugnaught's Progress" -- would cover the entire history of the Ugnaughts of Bespin, he gave short shrift to the years between the "Ugnaught rebellion" and the time of the broadcast, ten years after the Battle of Endor. Fivvle understandably chose to end the program with the event that, for a time, made him the biggest name in Outer Rim news.

Ugnaughts' Progress

An Ars Fivvle Presentation of an *Action Tidings* Special Report

This holofilm has been transcribed by a Serv-O-Droid ERL-21 transcribot. "Serv-O-Droid -- Order before Life Day and your restraining bolts are free."

Advertisement ends.

Ars Fivvle extinguishes pipe and turns back to the holodisplay, which still displays the Action Tidings logo.

Ars Fivvle: Aye, the Ugnaughts were in trouble when the Empire discovered Cloud City an' decided it was time t'take charge. I don't need t'recount the details o' that terrible period in our history.

Holodisplay shifts to footage depicting that terrible period in Ugnaught history.

AF: Indeed, holos speak louder than words.

Over poignant music, the holodisplay depicts Imperial stormtroopers supervising large Ugnaught work crews. A stormtrooper executes an Ugnaught slave on the spot. Holodisplay shifts to another gang of Ugnaughts in chains. Stormtroopers force them onto a slave barge at gunpoint. Holodisplay shift to depict time-lapse construction of Imperial garrison on the Ugnaught Surface. Holodisplay zooms in on Imperial insignia on side of outpost and freezes. Holobust of Imperial officer [databank cross-reference #299033645: Captain Hugo Treece]. Music swells to a militaristic dirge.

AF: The hated Treece, Imperial overlord o' Cloud City. If Calrissian's tenure had been a time o' plenty, this was a time o' terror. A dark, dark time fer the Ugnaughts o' Bespin, an' a time fer us t'rise up an' face our destinies. We fought back, an' in the end, we drove the nank-biters off our planet. The tunnel system in the city was critical fer this rebellion t'work.

Holodisplay image shift to footage of a team of Ugnaughts in a darkened tunnel constructing an explosive device from spare parts.

AF: Aye, hidden in the nooks an' crannies o' the city, brave Ugnaught patriots constructed a dozen bombs powerful enough t'knock the entire place out o' the sky. First, daring Ugnaught rebels planted the bombs at key points around Cloud City. Then, since we ain't stinkin' murderers like the Imperials, the daring renegades warned citizens -- even the Imperials -- that the city was going t'plummet an' they'd better get their backsides off t'safety. Treece was no fool. Even he woulda had a wee bit o' trouble explaining the deaths o' millions. An' the Ugnaughts, o' course, had the Surface, which would soon be alone in the sky fer miles around.

Holodisplay image shifts to shot from the rim of Cloud City as aircars and starships stream away. A still holobust of Lando Calrissian is superimposed over the image as Fivvle continues.

AF: As fortune would have it, former high humy Lando Calrissian chose that very moment t'return. According t'his own account, he had coincidentally returned t'Cloud City t'see what could be done about the Empire. Findin' the place deserted, he soon found himself fightin' fer his life against his own former aide, the Lobot himself. Lobot had been damaged in an accidental blaster mishap an' failed t'evacuate, unbeknownst t'the Ugnaughts, o' course. As if he didn't have enough t'deal with, Treece chose that moment t'return t'the city with a bomb squad, foolishly believin' his lackeys would be able t'undo what the Ugnaughts had so carefully done. When the first talkin' bomb

tricked 'em int'settin' it off, Treece was the only survivor. Calrissian an' Treece formed a brief alliance t'stop Lobot's rampage, an' used the cyborg's eerie mental powers t'disarm them all. An' as soon as the work was done, Treece literally kicked ol' Lando off o' Cloud City, through a railin'.

Image of Calrissian and evacuation fades once again into the Action Tidings logo.

AF: As he plummeted t'certain doom through the Life Zone, Calrissian's famous luck came through, in a big way. Lobot grabbed an emergency jet pack an' leapt off after his ol' boss, an' managed t'catch up t'Calrissian in time t'slow his descent. An' they were both lucky that the Surface had not yet been moved from underneath Cloud City so that all Ugnaughts -- an' the *Action Tidings* crew, naturally -- could see the demise of the place we'd grown t'hate. An' that's where we came in, when a section o' railing struck one o' *Floatboat 2*'s Tibanna bladders just as what would o' been an historic broadcast was beginnin'. Calrissian an' Lobot landed in the swamp nearby, an' without a second thought, we pulled the waterlogged pair int'our ailin' craft.



Image of Action Tidings logo shifts to still holo of the Action Tidings news team in Action Tidings Floatboat 2. Ars Fivvle and Pordy are visible and noticeably younger. Estimated probability that Action Tidings Floatboat 1 was totaled due to user error: 73%.

AF: All footage of Calrissian's fall was lost, unfortunately, but with good reason. Treece had called up the stormtroopers that still occupied that accursed garrison outpost on the Surface, an' soon we were under fire from Imperial skimmers. Naturally, we weren't armed, an' neither were the new arrivals. In the heat o' the moment, I conceived a brilliant improvised weapon. Despite the value of our footage, it was all we had. I snapped the belt drive of o' holocam 1, rigged it int'a crude slingshot, an' when the skimmers got close enough, I placed the film can in the center, pulled back, an' fired. The projectile struck one skimmer's propeller, causin' it t'explode, an' the second fled.

Calrissian couldn't thank us enough, an' personally asked me t'help him get in t'talk t'King Ozz in Ugnorgrad. Ozz filled him in on what Treece had been up to, how he worked Ugnaughts until they dropped an' then just brought in more. How he'd been thievin' from his own bosses. An' from that moment on, Lando Calrissian was determined t'aid the Ugnaught rebellion. Within minutes, we concocted a plan; within a half hour, we were back in *Floatboat 2* an' on our way back t'Cloud City. Calrissian an' Lobot left t'play their parts, while we stood watch over the landing site t'watch fer any additional Imperial craft that might be waiting in orbit. We spotted the second landin' craft right away, an' immediately set out t'warn our brave humy allies before it was too late.

Estimated veracity of anecdote: 66%.

AF: Fortunately, we'd brought a new camera with us. An' this time, there was no need t'go throwin' away good holofilm. Pordy, roll it.

Pordy:(Off-camera) Rollin', A.F.

Holodisplay image shifts to younger Ars Fivvle, standing on a raised platform. In the background, a pair of X-wing pilots (Human male [databank cross-reference #234990365: Commander Luke Skywalker] and Human female [databank cross-reference #234990366: Lt. Shira Brie] accompanied by an R2-series astromech exchange blaster fire with a much larger force of Imperial troops streaming from a landing craft. Captain Treece stands at near the craft, shouting orders.

The following segment transcribes holodisplay footage.

AF: Good afternoon, this be Ars Fivvle bringin' ye live coverage o' the fight fer Cloud City! An' a gallant struggle it is!

Stormtrooper 1: What the?

Stormtrooper 2: Hnh?

AF: A pair o' courageous, but woefully outnumbered Rebels is squared off against a horde of Imperial war dogs! We're hopin' to have interviews as soon as --

Blaster fire ceases.

Shira Brie: I don't believe this.

Luke Skywalker: I do -- but I don't *want* to!

AF: Whup! Just a moment! There seem t'be a break in the fightin'! A break apparently caused by --

Stormtrooper 1: Look! We're being watched!

AF: Us?

Treece: Kill them.

Lando Calrissian: *(Off-camera)* I wouldn't do that if I were you, Treece!

Treece: Eh?

Camera turns to take in Lando Calrissian and Lobot standing on a nearby platform.

Skywalker: *(Off-camera)* Well, I'll be! It's Lando!

LC: If you don't get your men out of here fast, I'll have Lobot re-arm the explosives -- and blow us all into the next star system!

Treece: No . . . I think not!

Treece raises a blaster and fires. The bolt strikes Lobot's cyborg implant, disabling him.

LC: Lobot!

Treece: It appears, Calrissian, that you've lost the only being capable of re-arming those bombs without touching them -- thereby setting off their self-destruct mechanisms. Or, to put it more simply, check . . . and mate!

Skywalker: *(Off-camera)* Oh great. Now what'll we --

Camera pans to Skywalker and R2-unit.

R2-unit: *(translated from binary)* Can't you can move things without touching them?

Skywalker: Huh? Of course! Why didn't I think of that?

R2-unit's reply indecipherable. Estimated probability R2-unit's warranty has been invalidated by failure to perform recommended memory wipes: 93%.

Skywalker: Hey, Hotshot! You blew it! The Lobot *wasn't* the only one who can move things without touching them! Take a look!

Camera angle spins wildly and settles on the scene below. Estimated probability camera lifted by a flying Ugnaught: 0.1%.

AF: M-mother o' saints! Th-the camera -- it moved by itself!

Skywalker raises his hands dramatically. No one moves. His eyes close. A loud "click" is heard.

Stormtrooper 2: Hey!

Click.

Stormtrooper 2: What—

Click.

Stormtrooper 2: Was—

Click.

Stormtrooper 2: Uh-oh.

Skywalker: The bombs are now active! You have thirty seconds to escape! Or you'll all *die!*

Brie: Luke! Y-you can't be serious --?

The Imperial stormtroopers scatter and flee to their landing craft. Treece stands his ground.

Treece: You heard the girl! He's bluffing! Now get back here, you simpering cowards! Get back before I --

Eleven loud explosions are heard in rapid fire succession. Holodisplay image blurs vertically, and goes black. Audio continues.

Treece: W-wait for m -- I-I mean *retreat!*

Camera pulls back to reveal host Fivvle, grinning.

AF: An' so the Imperial dogs were driven out o' the city in the clouds. Luke Skywalker -- I should say *Jedi* Skywalker -- had not, o' course, triggered the bombs themselves, merely the primer charges. Within minutes, Cloud City ceased its downward descent as repair drones fixed up the minor cosmetic damage. An' a short time later, with his former aide back t'perfect health an' left in charge o' bringin' the population back t'the city now that the Empire thought it destroyed, Calrissian left us again, returnin' t'the Rebellion an' eventually galaxy-wide fame as the destroyer o' the second Death Star.

Fivvle produces and reignites tabac pipe. Estimated probability broadcast will end within two minutes: 99%.

AF: Since that day, the Ugnaughts have kept their freedom. In the ensuin' years, the Surface would see expansion, an' even tourists fer the first time. The Swampway 200 would bring even more visitors eager t'learn more about our people, customs, an' way of life on this glorious golden giant called Bespin. Today, the Ugnaughts future is brighter than ever. An' even if *Action Tidings* had some small part in bringin' this about, the real credit belongs t'all of you: Irden, Botrut, Isced; the tribeless, the belters, the bosses an' the hard-workin' Ugnaughts that made Cloud City an' the Surface below a dream that became reality.

Estimated probability Fivvle will survive broadcast recalculated: 98%.

AF: I'm Ars Fivvle fer *Action Tidings*. Good night, Bespin.

Studio lights dim. Ars Fivvle walks offstage in silhouette. The Action Tidings news theme plays over the credits sequence. Program ends.

Activating voluntary memory wipe protocols at last.

GM Notes: Talking Bomb

The Ugnought rebels of Cloud City built a dozen ingeniously constructed bombs out of spare parts they found readily available in the hidden warren areas of the Miner's Quarter. Each device was also equipped with a droid brain and vocoder programmed specifically to trick anyone trying to disable the bomb into setting it off -- as Captain Treece's bomb squad learned much too late.

Since it worked so well the first time, some unscrupulous Ugnought engineers took the original design concept and began to distribute talking bombs to the black market. Of course, the effectiveness of the bombs is inversely proportional to the number of people who know how they work, so they are still rare and expensive. Aside from the Mining Quarter, heroes might purchase one from underworld arms dealers on Nar Shaddaa, Bazarre, and anywhere fine illegal explosives are sold.

The talking bomb is incredibly easy to set up -- the droid brain, like any other droid, views its owner as its master and will cheerily take care of the details -- though successful use relies in part on the gullibility of the target. Unless a character already knows what he or she is dealing with, the talking bomb initiates a conversation with any beings its droid brain perceives as likely triggers. The bomb gets two Bluff checks (bomb Bluff skill of 20), one when contact is made, opposed by a Sense Motive check from every character hearing its spiel (any character with ranks in Knowledge [technology] or Knowledge [Bespino lore] may add one of those skill scores as a bonus to the Sense Motive check). If the first Bluff succeeds, the bomb convinces the listener that it will offer sincere instructions on how to disarm it (the usual justification is along the lines of "Hey, would you want to blow up?"). This triggers a second Bluff check to see if the bomb successfully causes the listener (and only the listener) to actually arm the bomb instead (this process takes 2d4 rounds) and immediately set it off 1 round after the listener's Sense Motive check fails.

A Force-user may make a DC 14 Move Object check to activate or disable a talking bomb from a distance if he or she also has ranks in the Repair skill. If the Force-user wishes to shut down more than one bomb at the same time, add 2 to the DC for each additional bomb. The Force-user may also add his ranks in Repair to the roll. For this special use of the Move Object skill, the character need not be within 10 meters or be able to see the bomb or bombs.

Each talking bomb appears unique, since every one is built from scrap. The average device has the following statistics, but GMs should feel free to modify the details as they see fit.

Ugnought Talking Bomb

Cost: 8,000 + 1d4 x 1,000 credits (price varies by dealer, black market only)

Damage: 8d12 + 20

Crit: --

Type: Energy and slashing

Range: -- (18 m)

Weight: 45 kg

Size: Large

Group: Simple

"Hello, Bespin, Good-bye!"



Featuring a major *Star Wars* universe event -- Lando Calrissian's first return to Cloud City after *The Empire Strikes Back* -- issues 56 and 57 of Marvel's *Star Wars* comic book saw writer David Michelinie, with artists Walt Simonson (pencils) and Tom Palmer (inks), introduce readers to Captain Treece and the bomb squad stormtroopers, along with the *Action Tidings* news team and King Ozz's domain on the Ugnought Surface. Readers and young Skywalker also got to spend a little more time with Shira Brie, who would later become one of Luke's deadliest enemies when she was revealed as an Imperial mole.

You can read the full story (and do a little fact-checking on Fivvle's account of the incident) by tracking down the original issues or Dark Horse Comics' widely available reprint collection *Star Wars: A Long Time Ago... Vol. 4*, a series of trade paperbacks no *Star Wars* fan should be without.

The holodisplay dialog presented in part five (with the exception of R2-D2's translated binary) comes from the second part of the story, "Hello, Bespin, Good-bye!"